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ABSTRACT

The Counselor Education Program at the University of Texas at Austin was designed to provide, through didactic learning, individuation, and various experiental activities, the opportunity for each student to achieve the greatest possible development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that characterize a Master's degree level professional counselor. This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the program in meeting this intended objective. Graduates from 1981 through 1990 were sent questionnaires with which to evaluate the program and offer suggestions for improvement. Findings from the 19 graduates of the program that sent usable responses (out of a total of 43 surveyed) were analyzed. It was found that 63% of the respondents agreed that the overall objective of the program had been met. In the five areas of the program--contextual care courses, population characteristics, specialization, and research--only the contextual area did not receive a favorable majority vote. The criticism of this area was that the contextual courses were not relevant to all the needs of the students, specifically those on the higher education track. All of the core courses were believed to have contributed to the overall objective of the program. Seventy-nine percent of respondents felt that they were prepared for employment after completing the program; no one reported feeling unprepared. (NB)

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY: THE COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

BY

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REPORT

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

May 1991

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A FOLLOW-UP STUDY: THE COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

APPROVED:

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April 1, 1991

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CHAPTER 1

THE ELEMENTS OF AN EVALUATION

Importance of Evaluations

Evaluations are a part of life. They help individuals, as well as groups, realize their full potential. Evaluations can offer a way to avoid mediocrity and at the same time can provide a process for personal and professional improvement. Just as people try to improve daily activities, so too should organizations strive to make improvements a part of daily consideration. An evaluation of a program has been defined as assessing the accomplishments of the objectives, judging the effectiveness of such accomplishments, and making decisions to improve the program. The evidence collected in this process becomes important in future planning and decision making. (Gibson and Mitchell, 1986)

Establishing Guidelines

In developing an evaluation, certain guidelines need to be followed. In looking at an educational program, an important criteria is that the program goals and objectives must be clearly defined. The question to answer is "How well are they doing what they set out to do?" Two additional rules to observe are that criteria need to be established to measure progress towards the goals and that these criteria need to be validly applied. A program evaluation needs to involve those who are affected by the

program, for those who have first-hand knowledge offer a major contribution to the process. Another important guideline to follow is to use the feedback and results of the evaluation to improve the program by way of future planning, development, and decision making. This guideline is an integral part of the process of evaluations. A final rule of thumb is to accentuate the positive. An evaluation should not be seen as a threatening process intended to uncover hidden inadequecies. Strengths, as well as weaknesses, should be emphasized. (Gibson and Mitchell, 1986)

Consistent with these guidelines, Melvin George, cited by Wilson (1982), suggested that a program review must delineate the purpose of the review if it is to be effective. The participants of the review must be aware of the intended purpose. In addition to this, in order to really understand a program, it must be seen through the eyes of its participants. For they are the ones that truly understand the significance and importance of the program.

Kells and Vught (1988) addressed the importance of assessing the quality of a program. Specifically, they suggested the following factors be addressed: the quality of faculty, the quality of curriculum, the quality of support services, and the availability of financial resources.

The Use of Questionnaires

Though there are many ways to administer an evaluation, the

use of questionnaires in evaluations is perhaps the most widely used for collecting data. This practice is quicker and less costly than training interviewers to meet with each of the participants individually. Questionnaires can also be sent over a wide range of areas that might not be possible when interviewers are used. Another very important aspect of this type of evaluation is that the participants all see the same questions with the same emphasis. This helps in limiting subjectivity. Two disadvantages of the questionnaire are that there is a tendancy towards low response rates, and there is a built in bias in the sampling procedures since those choosing not to respond may share a common attitude. (Roth, 1981)

Though many of the values of an evaluations have been mentioned, there is one weakness that needs to be addressed; its subjectivity. In asking participants to answer questions and give their opinions, it is understood that information received is perhaps more subjective than objective. The standards for each participant may vary to some degree. It is important to keep this in mind in processing the evaluation. (Wilson, 1982)

Philosophy of Counselor Education Program

The report that follows is one student's Master Report of a follow-up study of The Counselor Education Program at the University of Texas at Austin. In evaluating this program it is necessary to look at the philosophy of this program. This was

accomplished by interviewing its director. The following information was presented during this session. The director describes this as a generic program. It is intended to educate people about the field of counseling. It is not intended to restrict counseling to any one setting or to individuals with specialized needs. The emphasis is on the person rather than on the setting. The desire is "to prepare counselors to work with people regardless of where these people are found."

There is a belief that it is premature for students to predict where they will be working. It is considered unwise to advise people not to prepare to work anywhere. The program wishes to "help a student be in position to move in any professional direction possible."

The Purpose of this Study

In addition to this basic philosophy, this University states, in the brochure for graduate studies in the department of Educational Psychology, that the objective of the Counselor Education Program is to provide, through didactic learning, individuation, and various experiential activities, the opportunity for each student to achieve the greatest possible development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that characterize a Master's-degree level professional counselor.

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the program in light of the intended objective. This was

facilitated by asking questions. To what degree does the Counselor Education Program meet this objective? Do the students who graduate from this program feel they are prepared for the role of a counselor? What suggestions, if any, could be made to improve this program? These questions and others were asked and the responses explored. Participants were all graduates of the Counselor Education Program and were informed of this purpose. They were given questionnaires and asked to evaluate the program, as well as, asked to give suggestions for improvements. This follow-up study was conducted consistently within the framework, as described above, for developing a valid evaluation.

CHAPTER 2

THE METHODOLOGY OF A FOLLOW-UP STUDY

This chapter will describe the process used for this follow-up study.

Subject Identification

In an effort to assess the quality of the Counselor Education Program it was determined that graduates from the last ten years, beginning with May of 1981 and continuing through December of 1990, would be asked to participate. A list of these alumni was obtained from the central administrative office of the Educational Psychology Department. The list totalled 108 graduates.

A compilation of addresses was made using the following measures. Personnel in the Department of Educational Psychology reviewed the list to identify students who had entered the University's doctoral program in educational psychology, had moved out of the United States, were deceased, or who's location was readily known. The doctoral students' addresses were on file in the office. Phone calls were made to solicit the addresses of alumni whose work locations were known. Directories were used from local school districts, The Austin Chapter of Counseling Development, The Texas Association for Counseling and Development, and the Licensed Professional Counselor. Inquiries were made to graduates, as well as current students, to locate more alumni.

These procedures resulted in a list of 43 names and addresses. This list constituted the subject pool to whom the follow-up questionnaire was sent.

Developing the Questionnaire

Once the subjects had been determined and located, the process of developing the follow-up study began. Literature on the subject was researched. Different types of evaluations were presented using differential styles. It was determined that a survey utilizing a questionnaire was appropriate for this particular review.

As discussed in Chapter 1, a follow-up study must ask and answer the question "How well are they doing what they set out to do?" In an effort to appropriately address this inquiry, it was necessary to interview the director of The Counselor Education Program. The rationale for this interview was that the data collected must be assessed in keeping with the program's goals and principles.

After the research and the interview were completed, certain guidelines for the follow-up study were established. An existing questionnaire and survey for this program had been written, but never implemented. Both of these instruments were reviewed, and appropriate questions were selected and compiled with newly written ones. Opinions, using the Likert scale of 1 to 5, and short open-ended questions were used. It was decided that the

responses should be anonymous. The questionnaire, which may be found in Appendix B, was three pages in length.

Obtaining Approval for the Study

Following specific guidelines established by The University of Texas, a cover letter was written. The letter stated the objective of the study and asked the alumni to participate, within a certain time period. Both the letter and the questionnaire were reviewed by the Internal Review Board for Human Subjects within the Department of Educational Psychology. This committee consist of three professors within the department who review all surveys and questionnaires. Approval was granted.

Conducting Mailout

The amount of postage required to mail the letter, questionnaire, and stamped addressed return envelope was determined. The 43 names and addresses included two out-of-state individuals, with the remainder of the participants living in Texas. Of those in Texas, the majority still lived in the central Texas region.

Results of Study

Twenty-three individuals responded to the questionnaire, which was a 53% response rate. Four of these had received a Master's degree but not in Counselor Education and were dropped from the analysis. Two letters were returned to sender, leaving a total of

19 questionnaires to be evaluated. These 19 responses constitute 44% of the original subject pool, thus suggesting a good representation of graduates from the program. All of the subjects were from the Austin area.

The data collected from the participants was then reported and evaluated in summative form. The results are reported in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

REPORTING THE DATA

This chapter will report the information gathered from the questionnaires. The demographic information is reported both in table form as well as summatively. The opinions and suggestions of the respondents will be reported by first presenting each question and then their responses, followed by a summary of the data.

Demographic Information

A composite of the demographic information from the 19 respondents is presented in Table 1. As can be seen, 16 of the subjects are female. The highest level of education is the Master's of Education, however, three individuals are currently enrolled in the University of Texas at Austin as doctoral students. One alumnus does not recall specializing, and another reports that private practice was her specialty; a speciality not advertized as part of the MEd program. Of the remaining subjects, four were in the higher education track and 13 were in school counseling. Most individuals who are eligible to be licensed as a LPC have that designation. In terms of employment, fourteen are currently working in the counseling profession, three are in the doctoral program, and two are unemployed. Of the two who are not employed, one is a mother choosing to stay at home with her preschool age children and does plan to engage in the counseling profession in the future, and the other person just recently graduated from this program and is currently seeking employment.

TABLE 1

Demographic Information About Subjects

	Sex	Year of Graduation	Highest Degree Held	Specialty Area	Licensure *	Occupation
1.	F	81	M.Ed.	School	TEA LPC	Ed. Consultant & private practice
2.	F	82	M.Ed.	School	TEA LPC	School Counselor
3.	F	83	M.Ed.	School	TEA LPC	School Counselor
4.	M	83	M.Ed.	School	LPC PA	School Psych/Counselor
5.	F	83	M.Ed.	School	TEA LPC	School Counselor
6.	F	83	M.Ed.	School	TEA LPC	School Counselor & family therapist
7.	M	85	M.Ed.		LPC	Christian Dir. & counselor
8.	F	85	M.Ed.	School	TEA LPC	School Counselor
9.	F	85	M.Ed.		LPC	Mental Health Therapist
10.	M	85	M.Ed.	Higher Ed.		Ph.D. student
11.	F	86	M.Ed.	School	TEA	Not employed
12.	F	86	M.Ed.	School	TEA	School Counselor
13.	F	87	M.Ed.	School		College Counselor
14.	F	87	M.Ed.	School	TEA LPC	Agency Counselor & Private Practice

TABLE 1
(continued)

	Sex	Year of Graduation	Highest Degree Held	Specialty Area	Licensure *	Occupation
15.	F	88	M.Ed.	School	TEA	School Counselor
16.	F	90	M.Ed.	Higher Ed.		Not employed
17.	F	90	M.Ed.	Higher Ed.		Career Counselor
18.	F	90	M.Ed.	School		Ph.D. student
19.	F	90	M.Ed.	Higher Ed		Ph.D. student

* TEA - Texas Education Agency
LPC - Licensed Professional Counselor
PA - Psychologist Associate

The Questionnaire and Responses

> The objective of the Counselor Education Program is to provide through didactic learning, individuation, and various experiential activities, the opportunity for each student to achieve the greatest possible development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that characterize a Master's-degree level professional counselor.
>
> This objective is stated in U.T.'s brochure for Graduate Study in Counselor Education. Please indicate your overall position as to whether this objective was accomplished.

The following is a summation of responses to a Likert scaling of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree:

Likert scale	Number of responses
2	4
3	1
3 +	1
4	12
unmarked	1

Sixty-three percent of the respondents agreed that the overall objective of the program was met. This figure is in comparison to the 21% who felt that the stated goal of the program had not been accomplished.

> Please indicate what area or areas, if any, you feel did not meet this objective.

The responses varied from individuals citing isolated points of view to subjects offering commonalities to this areas. Included in the former was a need for classes in the following areas,

student development, clinical diagnosis, ethics and legalities, elementary counseling, and advanced psychometrics. The areas that received more of a concensus in need were:

experiential - additional training involving therapeutic techniques with more guided practice

didactic - requiring courses in family counseling, group counseling, and psychopathology

individuation - allowing more freedom of choice within the core courses, specifically less emphasis on TEA certification and its required out-of-department courses, and more equal emphasis on courses directly relating to other licenses.

In addition to these specific recommendations it was mentioned by four graduates, who graduated within the last five years, that master students were not treated as well as doctoral students. Specifically, one respondent suggested that MEd students were treated as "second class students" and were not afforded the equal opportunities of doctoral students. It was seen that the counselor education students were offered classes only after Ph.D. students had been given first option.

Please indicate what area or areas, if any, you feel met this objective.

The responses varied. However, there was a concensus in the following:

experiential - practicum offers invaluable opportunities

didactic - the core courses, specifically, counseling theories, seminar in guidance, with its emphasis on attitudes and ethics of the counselor, and career counseling, in addition, courses in testing and measurement, and developmental theories

individuation - research opportunities and the challenge of critical thinking

Please indicate whether the five areas within the program contributed to the objective stated above.

Area 1 Contextual - These two courses were in EDA and EDC and met requirements of T.E.A. and graduate school requirements for out-of-department courses.

Using the Likert scale as above mentioned, the responses were:

Likert scale	Number of responses
1	2
2	3
3	5
4	3
5	2
unmarked	4

Only 26% agreed that Area I contributed to the overall objective. However, only 26% disagree as well, leaving 48% either neutral or silent.

Area II Core Courses: Overall

Likert scale	Number of responses
3	3
4	12
5	3
unmarked	1

Seminar in Guidance

3	7
4	9
5	2
unmarked	1

Counseling Theory

3	2
4	6
5	10
unmarked	1

Career Development

2	2
3	4
4	7
5	6

Practicum

3+	2
4	4
5	13

Group Counseling

2	1
3	2
3 +	1
4	5
5	5
not/applicable	5

The core courses, Area II, were thought of as contributing to the overall objective with 79% in agreement. Seminar in Guidance had a total of 58% in agreement, Counseling Theory with 84%, Career Development with 68%, Practicum with 89%, and Group Counseling with a favorable concensus of 71%, of those who answered this question.

Area III Population Characteristics- Human Development & Social Psychology

2	2
2 +	1
3	5
4	5
5	6

Area III had 58% who marked either a 4 or a 5, indicating that the majority viewed this area as contributing to the objective.

Area IV Specialization - Assessment course and electives

3	1
4	11
5	7

This area reported the highest percent with 95% of the respondents reporting agreement that this specialization area contributed to the overall objective.

Area V Research

2	2
3	1
4	6
5	9
unmarked	1

Area V, Research, received a 79% favorable concensus.

How prepared were you for a counseling job?

Using a Likert scale of 1 for not very prepared and 5 for very prepared, the following was reported:

Likert scale	Number of responses
3	4
4	12
4 +	1
5	2

This information shows that 79% of the respondents felt prepared. While 21% felt neutral towards this question, no individual reported feeling unprepared.

What course was your favorite?

Six courses were mentioned by at least two respondents. They were: Master's report, child psychopathology, counseling theories, practicum, human development, and group counseling. Five of these six are required in the Counselor Education program.

What course was the most challenging?

Courses in psychometrics, child psychopathology, practicum, family therapy, and master's report were each mentioned by two alumni.

What course would you like to have deleted?

Nine individuals reported that they would not have chosen to delete any course. Five respondents each selected one course that was mentioned only by them. Four subjects said they would have chosen to delete either EDC, EDA, or both, saying that neither was relevant to their needs. Two of these individuals were in the school track, and the other two were in higher education.

If you were in need of financial support, were the resourses available?

Eleven individuals reported that this question was not applicable to them. Of the remaining eight, 5, or 63% of those needing financial assistance, indicated that aid was available. Three, or 37%, indicated that it was not.

Please give your overall view of the quality of the professors.

All of the respondents indicated that most of the instructors were very good. Descriptions such as competent, challenging, excellent, qualified, skilled and interesting were written. While eleven alumni reported only favorable impressions, at least seven individuals did report that they found some of the teachers to be from average to incompetent. Two respondents mentioned that they felt the master students did not receive as much interest from professors as did the doctoral students.

Please give your view of the support services available. (Libraries, equipment, physical plant).

100% reported that the services were favorable, ranging from excellent to adequate. Two individuals mentioned a need for more computers in the PCL.

In terms of your current job, what were the most useful things you learned in the M.Ed. program?

There were many commonalities to this response. Seven individuals noted that the practical experience with hands on

learning was invaluable. This allowed for the future counselor to develop his/her own style and become aware of strengths and weaknesses. Information learned in career counseling and development was recognized by four of the respondents. The knowledge gained from the counseling theory class was mentioned as helpful by four subjects. The art of listening was cited by two people, as well as, the importance of the skills developed in the course on group counseling. Testing and measurement were reported as necessary tools by two other individuals. Responses that were each made by only one idividual included the importance of ethics, professional relationships, value of the individual, professional expectations, and developmental theories.

> What have you needed to know that you did not learn in the M.Ed. program?

A commonality to this question was a need for more practical strategies and techniques used in counseling, rather than just theory. There was a desire to know how "to be" with clients and how to deal with personal interference. Three individuals reported a need to prepare for crisis counseling and to be able to identify children at risk. In addition, at least two subjects have needed to know more about children in general, as well as, those with specific needs. Communicating this information to parents was also mentioned. Learning in the area of family and marriage counseling were mentioned by two. Three alumni, who graduated

prior to group being a requirement, reported a need in this area. One individual needed to know about psychopathology, and another reported that a theory on student development was necessary. One subject added that real life experiences cannot be taught. Another graduate suggested that this program could not teach love, caring, and becoming involved without entanglement. These qualities an individual must simple possess.

> From the perspective of a professional, can you give suggestions to improve the program?

Five repsondents suggested offering more practical experience. Specifically, one graduate called for additional integrating of students with professionals out in the work force. Another respondent suggested that one practicum be completed early in the program, with the second taking place towards the end. Two alumni suggested that a course dealing with school counseling be included. It was also recommended that a course be offered dealing with children and taught by a psychologist who practices with this age group.

Seven alumni mentioned the need for a greater variety in class options. Five of these graduated before 1986. Specifically, four graduates suggested offering courses that meet the requirements for the licensing of the LPC and PA. At least three individuals suggested adding a group therapy class, though as one subject suspected, this has already been done. It was suggested by three

individuals that the core courses be taught by more professors, rather than having one professor teach several.

One respondent felt that the master program should be reevaluated as to its importance within the Educational Psychology Department. Two other graduates wrote that there were biases against master students. There was a desire for departmental support of these students beyond the few professors immediately involved with the program.

One individual suggested that there be more screening of potential M.Ed. students, perhaps including an interview. A final thought was to encourage graduates to seek counseling themselves to enable them to be better helpers.

Any other comments?

Most of the additional comments have been previously addressed, however, one graduate reported that the continuing education offered at this university is excellent.

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND SPECULATIONS

This chapter will present a summary and conclusions. Suggestions will be offered to improve the Counselor Education Program. The chapter will close with a speculation as to some of the data collected.

Summary

Nineteen graduates responded to this follow-up study. As was mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the problems involved with mail-out surveys is the expected low response rate. In this study, excluding those six individuals who either never received the letter or who should never have received it, more than 50% responded. This is a good response rate and increases the validity of the evaluation.

The majority of graduates, 63%, feel that this program is accomplishing its overall objective. In the five areas of the program, only the contextual area does not receive a favorable majority vote. The criticism of this area is that the contextual courses are not relevant to all the needs of the students, specifically those on the higher education track.

All of the core courses are believed to have contributed to the overall objective of this program. Reviewing the courses mentioned as favorites, one finds that there are three core courses on the list. Area IV, or Specialization, received the highest mark

with a 95% concensus as to its contribution to the program's objective. Area V, which is the Master's Report, is believed to be an integral part of the program. The response was that 79% felt it contributed to the program.

Perhaps the most realistic indicator that the program is accomplishing what it sets out to do is the opinion of the graduates regarding their preparation for employment. A concensus of 79% feel that they were ready for the challenge ahead, and no one reported feeling unprepared. All of these opinions, except those given to Area I, support the belief that the overall objective of the Educational Psychology Department has been met.

In summarizing the open-ended questions, 47% of the respondents would choose not to delete any course, while four individuals did suggest deleting EDA and/or EDC. Financial aids appears to be available to the majority of those individuals needing it. It is uncertain as to why 37% felt this area inadequate.

In assessing the quality of the professors, all respondents reported that there were exceptionally good instructors. The majority felt that they were stimulated and challenged to learn. As would be expected however in any profession, some teachers were seen as being mediocre, lacking in style, support, and competence. A couple of graduates' favorite professor was named by several others as being their worse. This fact supports the nature of

subjectivity involved in dealing with individuals. Twenty-one percent of the individuals did feel that the master students were not treated as fairly as the doctoral students.

The quality of the support services was reported as outstanding. Practical experience was listed as the number one factor of importance in preparing graduates to enter the world of work. The supervision and knowledge gained from placement in an actual setting was believed to be the strength of the program. In general, subjects appreciated more practical, rather than theoretical, knowledge. Just as the practical element in this program was its strength, so too was it mentioned as the area needing improvement in preparing graduates for counseling positions. There appeared to be a desire to get as much experience while in school as possible.

Suggestions made by participants to improve the program, include providing more practical experiences, offering more integration between students and the counseling professionals, adding a greater variety of courses, involving more professors in the program, and improving the relationship between the Counselor Education Program and the other five areas of the Educational Psychology Department.

Conclusions

The Counselor Education Program at The University of Texas at Austin appears to be well thought of by its graduates. In

Chapter 1, it was written that an evaluation must be conducted by asking the question, "How well are they doing what they set out to do?" The answer found within this study is that "they" are doing quite well.

Even with the support of the majority of graduates, there are a few suggestions offered that might make the program even better.

1. The first is in the contextual area. Perhaps the requirement that all students take EDC and EDA should be reevaluated. In the state of Texas, an individual cannot be licensed as a public school counselor without a valid teaching certificate. Students who do not meet this requirement might be better served by taking courses more relevant to their needs.

2. Allow the course in psychopathology to be included as an elective option. This would satisfy the LPC requirement, and give students more course options.

3. Continue integrating the "real world" of counseling with the didactic side. This could be handled through the courses in Seminar in Guidance and Practicum. A suggestion is to have a counselor speak at the beginning of each class in Seminar in Guidance. A committee made up of practicum students could be in charge of making these arrangements. They could invite their on-site

supervisors to participate. This opportunity would allow new students to become more aware of the diversity in the field of counseling and at the same time allow them to meet students who are completing this program. This could help provide continuity within the program.
The Practicum course could provide additional speakers. The master students are more advanced at this point in their education, and more specific issues could be addressed.

4. Increase the number of professors who teach the core courses. This would allow students the opportunity to be exposed to different viewpoints.

5. The importance of this program should be reconfirmed. If it is indeed believed to be an integral component of the department, then several suggestions are offered.
All students entering the Department of Educational Psychology should be informed of all six areas that are a composite of the department. If there are some courses that are to be reserved for doctoral students only, then this information should be public. If, however, a course is not specifically designed for PhD. candidates, then master students should be allowed equal opportunity to enroll in that course. The faculty of this department

should be informed as to the quality of the master students, and that they are deserving of fair and equal treatment.

6. There needs to be greater consistency between what the students want to learn and what the program wants them to learn. There are two suggestions for this. First, it is suggested that students, prior to their acceptance into the program, be aware of the philosophy of the Counselor Education Program, as presented in Chapter 1. This could be accomplished by having the students sign a statement indicating their acceptance of and agreement to this philosophy when they return the invitation to enroll in the program. This should allow for less discrepancy between what the students say they need, more practical experience, and what the program has to offer, more theoretical knowledge. Although this philosophy is stated in the course in Seminar in Guidance, often the student already has predetermined his or her own hidden agenda. Another way to become more consistent, would be to reevaluate the philosophy. If students feel practical experience is more valuable than theory, perhaps this issue should be addressed. Whichever way is believed to be appropriate, there needs to be a consistency of thought within the program.

In conclusion, this Counselor Education Program is well received by its graduates. Suggestions are offered only with the intent of making a very good program an even better one.

Speculations

In reviewing the data collected and assimilating it into the framework of this program, there are several speculations that are offered by this researcher. It would appear that this program continually monitors itself and makes adjustments for improvements. One example is the inclusion of the group component to the core courses. As indicated by several students, this course was not originally apart of their education. It also appears that this program now offers students a greater variety of choices in courses and professors. This conclusion is based on comparing the data of respondents who graduated in the early 1980's with the data of those who graduated later. Recent graduates made fewer comments concerning this limitation.

The remarks made regarding negative treatment of master students did include two from the the late 1980's, however more comments were made from those graduating longer ago. This would indicate that there has been improvement within this area as well. This might be due to greater integration of master students in classes with doctoral candidates.

The program offers two specialties, school counseling and

higher education/ Community Colleges. Though many students may choose to practice privately, this program does not specifically offer this as a specialty. This is perhaps why psychopathology has not been required. While this program, with its generic viewpoint, can usually accomodate all counseling students, it is believed that many students enroll in the program only to discover that some of their own goals are not consistent with the goals of the program. This most likely creates tension on the part of the student and the administration.

In speculating on the inconsistencies presented by the need for practical experience versus the need for theoretical knowledge, it is assumed that although students are informed of the general philosophy of the program, this philosophy is not readily accepted by students. There is often a feeling of inadequacy that can only be overcome with actual counseling experience.

Concluding Remarks

This follow-up study is completed. The preceding chapters detail the reason for doing a study, the method involved, the presentation of the data, and finally the conclusions that can be made. As was written in Chapter 1, an evaluation offers a way for professional growth. The overall impression of this program is favorable, however there are some areas that could be improved. It is the hope of this researcher, that consideration be given to the suggestions offered. There is a sincere desire that the Counselor

Education Program be the very best that it can be and that it continue to graduate students who will enter the world of work prepared for the future.

APPENDICES

A. Cover Letter

B. Questionnaire

C. Table 2 and Table 3 - Questionnaire Data using Likert Scale

APPENDIX A

February 12, 1991

Greetings to U.T. Alumni of the Counselor Education Program,

I am a candidate for graduation in May from your alma mater. For my Master's Report I am conducting a Follow-up Study of the Counselor Education Program. Dr. Howsesian is my supervising professor, and we are quite excited about this project. You were selected as a possible participant because you graduated from this program within the last ten years. You are under no obligation to participate in this study. Your completing the questionnaire will be taken as evidence of your willingness to participate and your consent to have the information used for purposes of the study. You are entitled to a copy of this questionnaire.

I have prepared a three-page questionnaire that asks for your thoughts and opinions. I am aware that you are probably very busy, but I invite you to participate and take the time, 15 to 30 minutes, to complete this survey. Not only will you help me, but the results will be evaluated and reported with your suggestions as an effort to improve the M.Ed. Counselor Education Program.

The questionnaire is anonymous, however, if you decide to participate and would like the results mailed to you, you can either include your name and address, or call me at (512) 453-1050 and leave a message, or call Dr. Howsesian at (512) 471-4409. I will happily share my findings with you. If you have any questions concerning the questionnaire, please feel free to call me, as well.

If you are tempted to disregard this invitation, please consider the following:

Statistically speaking, only half of all questionnaires are returned.

I was only able to track down addresses for a portion (45) of the graduates in the ten year period used for this evaluation.

The more response received, the greater the validity of this evaluation.

So please take the time to fill out this questionnaire.

For your convenience, I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope. I would like your responses ASAP, but if you need some time, please try to return it no later than February 28.

I thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mindy Croom

Mindy Croom

Richard Howsesian

Dr. Richard Howsesian, Director
Counselor Education Program

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APPENDIX B

ALUMNI QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN: MASTER'S OF EDUCATION: COUNSELOR EDUCATION

Circle one: Male Female List Highest Degree held:_____

Date of Graduation from M.Ed program? _____

Specialization (School or Higher Ed.) _____

Licensure: (Circle as many as are appropriate)

TEA Counseling Certificate L.P.C. Psychological Associate

Please describe your employment history since graduation.

_____

The objective of the Counselor Education Program is to provide, through didactic learning, individuation, and various experiential activities, the opportunity for each student to achieve the greatest possible development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that characterize a Master's-degree level professional counselor.

This objective is stated in U.T.'s brochure for Graduate Study in Counselor Education. Please indicate your overall position as to whether this objective was accomplished.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly Agree

Please indicate what area or areas, if any, you feel did not meet this objective.

Please indicate what area or areas, if any, you feel met this objective.

Please indicate whether the five areas within the program contributed to the objective stated above.

Area 1 Contextual - These two courses were in EDA and EDC and met the requirements of TEA and graduate school requirements for out-of-department courses.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree		neutral		strongly agree

Area II Core Courses: Overall	1	2	3	4	5
Seminar in Guidance	1	2	3	4	5
Counseling Theory	1	2	3	4	5
Career Development	1	2	3	4	5
Practicum	1	2	3	4	5
Group Counseling	1	2	3	4	5

Area III Population Characteristics-Human Development & Social Psychology

1	2	3	4	5

Area IV Specialization - Assessment course and electives

1	2	3	4	5

Area V Research Your topic_____

1	2	3	4	5

_____

How prepared were you for a counseling job?

1	2	3	4	5
not very prepared				very prepared

What course was your favorite? _____

What course was the most challenging? _____

What course would you like to have deleted? _____

Why?

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If you were in need of financial support, were the resourses available?

Yes No Not Applicable

Please give your overall view of the quality of the Professors.

Please give your view of the support services available. (Libraries, equipment, physical plant).

In terms of your current job, what were the most useful things you learned in the M.Ed. program?

What have you needed to know that you did not learn in the M.Ed. program?

From the perspective of a professional, can you give suggestions to improve the program?

Any other comments?

Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate it. Please return this questionnaire (ASAP) before February 28 to:

Mindy Croom
c/o Dr. Richard Mowsesian
Department of Ed. Psy. EDB 262
College of Education
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas 78712

Appendix C

TABLE 2

Opinions of Courses to Overall Objective *

	Area 1	Area II	Area III	Area IV	Area V
1.	3	4	5	5	5
2.	4	4	5	5	5
3.	5	5	4	5	5
4.		3	3	4	2
5.		4	5	5	3
6.	4	4	3	4	4
7.	3	4	4	4	4
8.	4	4	4	4	4
9.			2+	3	2
10.	3	4	4	5	5
11.	1	3	2	5	5
12.	2	4	5	4	4
13.		3	3	4	5
14.	1	4	5	4	5
15.	5	4	3	4	4
16.	3	5	5	4+	5
17.	2	4	2	4	4
18.	3	5	4	5	5
19.	2	4	3	4	

* Using a Likert Scale of 1 to 5

TABLE 3

Area II

	Seminar in Guidance	Counseling Theory	Career Development	Practicum	Group
1.	4	4	4	5	4
2.	3	5	3	5	5
3.	5	5	5	5	N/A
4.	3	4	3	4	3
5.	4	3	5	3+	N/A
6.	4	3	4	4	4
7.	4	5	3	4	N/A
8.			5	5	4
9.	3	4	3	3+	3+
10.	4	4	4	5	5
11.	3	5	2	4	N/A
12.	4	5	4	5	N/A
13.	3	5	4	5	4
14.	3	5	5	5	2
15.	4	4	4	5	5
16.	5	5	5	5	5
17.	4	4	4	5	3
18.	4	5	5	5	4
19.	3	5	2	5	5

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